

SUMMARY

**Informal Thematic Debate of the General Assembly
On “Partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Taking stock, moving forward”**

Monday, 27 November 2006

I. Introduction

An informal thematic debate on development under the rubric of “*Partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Taking stock, moving forward*” was organized on 27 November by the President of the 61st session of the General Assembly, H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa. The aim of the debate was to give impetus to the implementation of MDGs, by providing a forum to examine practical measures and strategies that would lead to tangible results. It brought together donor and recipient countries as well as civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, which shared their successful experiences and new ideas.

Four key messages emerged from the debate. Firstly, commitments made at the major UN conferences and summits, particularly the one on global partnership for development, should be fulfilled in a timely fashion. Secondly, partnerships were critical in expediting the implementation of the MDGs and these should be encouraged and nurtured at the national and international levels. Thirdly, the role of UN is central to the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. The experience of Millennium Villages was applauded. Finally, by working together, the MDGs could still be achieved, which would be the single greatest service to humanity. Qatar proposed to host a follow up meeting to the thematic debate in Doha in the first half of 2007. More detailed remarks of the speakers and participants are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

II. Morning Session

The President of the General Assembly, **H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa** emphasised that partnership is vital as development goals will only be achieved if the private sector, civil society and governments were fully engaged. She stated that we were more interdependent than ever before. At the same time, we were confronted with momentous challenges like climate change and demographic growth. She said that we should also take solace from the fact that progress was being made on many avenues and it was important that efforts to implement the commitments should continue. She declared that the 61st session of the General Assembly should be the year of action and implementation, as it follows from the 60th session, which was the year of promises and commitments.

The UN Secretary-General, **Mr. Kofi Annan** observed that when he took office a decade ago, the development debate had been distinguished more by disagreements than actual implementation. That has changed today, thanks to the vision and political will that emerged from the UN conferences and summits. We have much to be proud of, but cannot be complacent. We have the MDGs now but the

prospects of achieving the goals are mixed: the world may meet the poverty goal, owing to the progress in Asia, but even there, progress towards other goals – notably Goal 7, ensuring environmental stability – is lagging, while in other parts, notably in Africa, we are still a long way from where we need to be. And global partnership for development remains more a phrase than fact, especially in the area of trade. The developing countries themselves need to fulfil their commitments to adopt and transparently implement comprehensive national strategies for development, while richer countries, on their part, need to live up to their commitments and provide resources. Finally, he emphasized that the UN has a central role to play in national and global development efforts. He stressed his conviction that attaining the MDGs on time would be the single greatest service that we can collectively perform to humanity.

The President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), **H.E. Ambassador Ali Hachani**, strongly stressed that international solidarity is the most crucial ingredient of global efforts to get rid of the menace of poverty and only through partnership can we eradicate poverty. ECOSOC has played an important role in involving all stakeholders in the follow up of the international conferences. The resolution on the strengthening of ECOSOC adopted recently by the General Assembly is an important step forward and the next substantive session of ECOSOC will be a milestone in enabling the Council to play its central role in realization of the UN development agenda, including the MDGs.

The Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), **Mr. Kemal Dervis**, noted that no region is on track in meeting all the MDGs and efforts to meet Goal 8 – global partnership for development – needs to be strengthened. Sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania are the worst off regions, where none of the goals are likely to be met judging by current trends. However, these current trends can be changed with alterations in policy. Growth is today becoming less pro-poor than it has been in the past. Official Development Assistance (ODA) has risen, but much in the form of debt relief and there is a danger that ODA in the next two years will be lower than the level of 2005. There is today more recognition for the need for multilateralism than there was in 2000. It is only by working together that we can build human security and prosperity for all.

The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, **Mr. José Antonio Ocampo**, noted that the United Nations Development Agenda, drawn from the UN conferences and summits, provides shared principles and objectives and represents agreed goals and targets, of which the MDGs are a distillation. He highlighted two elements: the struggle for equity and the commitment to implement the Agenda in a spirit of partnership. He stated that the MDGs put eradication of poverty at the centre of development cooperation. With regard to partnership, he emphasized that the Monterrey Consensus provided the best formulation of the Global Partnership for Development, while voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiatives formed a fundamental outcome of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. He stressed that the progress in the implementation of the UN Development Agenda is contingent on building a more strengthened, dynamic and effective partnership among all stakeholders. He congratulated the President for her Initiative.

The Vice-President of the Islamic Development Bank Group (IDB), **Mr. Amadou Boubacar Cisse**, stated that the bank is dedicated to fostering socio-economic development in its 56 member countries, all of which are developing countries. Fight against poverty is IDB's main strategic objective. Currently, IDB commits annually over \$4 billion in assistance, half of which is targeted at development programmes and projects, addressing both the impact and root-causes of poverty. He also highlighted the IDB's thirty-year partnership as a member of the Coordination Group, comprising mainly of Gulf-based bilateral and multilateral donors, which together has provided over \$80 billion in development assistance worldwide. Mr. Cisse announced that the IDB Board of Governors recently established a Poverty Alleviation Fund, with an initial proposed capital of \$10 billion. The Fund will provide financing on highly concessional terms and will primarily focus on Least Developed Member

Countries in Africa, with the priority areas in the framework of MDGs. He informed that the Fund is scheduled to start operations immediately after the formal approval of its charter in mid-2007.

Mr. Jeffrey Sachs, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals, stated that one special accomplishment is that the MDGs have given hope to the world. He underscored that the steps for achieving the MDGs were clear, simple and practical, such as to provide insecticide-treated bed nets or to provide small amounts of fertilizer to increase the agricultural yield. In addition, he emphasized the importance of access to information and communication technology. He stressed the importance of scaling up the intervention, with proven and practical ways. But for this he noted that more resources are needed and that the international community had the finance, technology and resources to help the world's poor.

In the interactive debate that followed, 12 delegations, some of which were represented at the ministerial and senior official levels, (**Egypt, Tajikistan, Dominican Republic, Mongolia, South Africa** on behalf of G77 and China, **Finland** on behalf of the European Union, **Barbados, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirate, Bahrain, Germany and Qatar**) took the floor. 22 other delegations had sought for the floor, but due to time constraint, the President invited them to actively participate in the Town Hall Meeting planned for in the afternoon. The following are the key points emerged in the interactive debate.

- The importance of **implementing the commitments on global partnership for development** was stressed by all. While many delegations reiterated that the full and timely implementation of global partnership on the part of developed countries was essential for the achievement by developing countries of the internationally agreed development goals, including MDGs by 2015. There was also a reaffirmation that each country needs to take primary responsibility for its own development. The importance of **partnership for development** within their own countries was also highlighted, involving public and private sector, NGOs and the civil society.
- A group of donor countries reaffirmed their **commitment towards meeting the target of ODA volume to reach 0.7 % of GNP** in order to support the efforts of developing countries as well as the time table in achieving the target by 2015. In addition, the importance of implementing the Paris Declaration to improve the **aid effectiveness** was emphasized. Some developing countries reported on their contribution to international cooperation both financially and in kind.
- In the sphere of international cooperation, some delegations mentioned various programmes on **trade**, noting their contribution to development. In particular, it was pointed out that Aid for Trade was a complement, not a substitute of a pro-development outcome of trade negotiations.
- Many delegations noted the importance of **the role that the United Nations** plays in forging and facilitating the global partnership and in the promotion of international cooperation for development.
- Many delegations reported on their efforts in pursuing the MDGs, in particular in **formulating their own national development strategies** that integrate MDGs. Some delegations emphasized the importance of having long-term development strategies, within which shorter, more focused poverty reduction strategies could be developed. The importance of **effective monitoring mechanism** as well as planning ahead in order to prevent problems, rather to confront them, was highlighted.

- While prioritization of goals depends on each country's situation, most delegations stressed the importance in pursuing **social development goals** together with economic growth. **Political stability and peace** was considered as fundamental in pursuing development.
- Qatar proposed to host a follow-up meeting in Doha in the first half of 2007.

III. Afternoon session – Town Hall Meeting

The afternoon session was organized in the format of a town-hall meeting. The Panel consisted of representatives from Government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The panel and the interactive debate that followed were moderated by **Mr. Shashi Tharoor**, Under-Secretary-General for Communication and Public Information.

The key message of the session was that while we are off track with the achievement of the MDGs in many parts of the world, with a drastic turn around, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, the MDGs can still be reached. The participants unequivocally spoke in favour of forging new partnerships among governments, civil society and the private sector. The successful initiatives presented by the panellists, which often employ a set of low-cost, high impact interventions, demonstrated the enormous potential of partnerships and that their potential still needs to be fully tapped, in particular through scaling-up.

H.E. Dr. Fatima Al-Balooshi (Minister of Social Development, Kingdom of Bahrain) shared her experience of promoting partnership in support of the MDGs in Bahrain and described concrete steps which her government has taken to help the private sector and civil society to get engaged in the achievement of the MDGs. With regard to civil society involvement, she informed that her government, with support of UNDP had set up “NGO support centres” to provide both financial and technical support to NGOs. With regard to the private sector involvement, she stated that the government of Bahrain had established a list of projects, essential in achieving the MDGs, which has been made available to the private sector. Based on the list, private sector can “adopt programmes” which are then generally carried out by NGOs.

Ms. Maureen Harrington (Vice-President for Policy and International Relations, Millennium Challenge Corporation of the U. S. A.) gave a brief introduction to the work of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). She said that the MCC's approach relied on partnership, whereby funds are provided as grants, not loans, without any ties. She also stated that in order to leverage the resources available, the MCC chooses its partners carefully, focussing on (a) whether countries are ruled justly, (b) whether countries are investing in their people and (c) the political environment. Mrs. Harrington also stressed that the focus of the MCC is on the “return on poverty reduction” and in this regard pointed out that on several occasions the MCC has been working together with other donors to allow for the best poverty outcome. She also noted that the MCC regards private sector as its “exit strategy” since the long-term poverty reduction requires private-sector activities. The MCC, therefore, encouraged investment in the private sector, in particular the domestic entrepreneurs.

H.E. Mr. Hisham Alwugayan (Deputy Director General, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development) gave a brief overview of the work of the Kuwait Fund, which is designed to strengthen infrastructure, operating in a similar manner as the World Bank. The Fund embarks on over 20 projects a year, operating in 101 countries. It has spent \$12.5 billion to date. The Fund has realigned its work with the MDGs, focusing increasingly on the delivery of health services.

Mr. George Soros (Chairman, the Soros Fund Management) noted that Sub-Saharan Africa is the major stumbling block for reaching the MDGs. He identified four main challenges which had

prevented Africa from making progress towards the MDGs. First, the colonial legacy, second, the “resources curse,” which includes corruption and conflicts associated with the exploitation of natural resources. Third, HIV/AIDS and fourth, global warming. He stated that despite these daunting challenges progress had been made in addressing them. In particular, Mr. Soros noted that the pilot Millennium Villages for which he had provided \$50 million, accounting for one third of the cost, had proven to be a viable blueprint for sustainable rural development in Africa. He expressed the hope that governments would commit the necessary resources for rolling out the Millennium Villages Projects on a larger scale. He noted that over the last four years progress has also been made in addressing the “resource curse”, notably through the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), a joint initiatives of governments, multinational enterprises and NGOs. He also emphasised the importance of NEPAD in addressing the issue of governance through its peer review mechanism and in this regard highlighted the work of AfriMAP, a Soros Fund initiative, which is monitoring the performance of governments and promoting compliance of African States with the requirements on good governance, democracy, human rights and the role of law.

Mr. Tokyo Sexwale (Executive Chairman of the Mvelaphamda Group of Companies/ South Africa and Chairman of the African-Arab Civil Council Initiative) singled out corruption as the “threat No. 1” to reaching the MDGs in Africa,. Mr. Sexwale informed participants that in order to advance the MDGs in Africa and Arab countries, the Africa-Arab Civil Council, which brings together business and civil society, had been established in September 2006. He proposed that each of the fortune 500 companies should adopt one Millennium Village. He said that rapid scaling up was possible, basing his remarks on the experience with his family foundation which will scale up the provision of wheel chairs to the most disadvantaged from South Africa to all 53 countries of Africa, starting with Angola. He urged the new Secretary-General to stay the course in the quest to achieve the MDGs. He hailed the Islamic Development Bank for their initiative to establish the Poverty Alleviation Fund..

Ms. Joanna Kerr (Executive Director, Association for Women’s right in Development) focussed her remarks on the importance of addressing the gender dimension of poverty, noting that the root causes of poverty were different for men and women and that hence a gendered approach to poverty eradication was necessary to fight the feminisation of poverty. She deplored the continuing low priority of gender on the international agenda and the lack of a gendered approach to poverty analysis and policy development. Ending on a positive note she commended the Secretary General’s High-Level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence for its proposal to create a consolidated UN gender equality and women’s empowerment programme and thereby to strengthen the issue of gender mainstreaming within the UN system.

H.E. Mr. Markku Niskala (Secretary-General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) stated that, while the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies continue to be seen by many as humanitarian and hence relief-minded organisation, they were equally committed to long-term development. He informed participants that to this end they had adopted their own Global Agenda last year. Mr. Niskala identified five risk areas as having an immediate impact on the achievement of the MDGs: (a) climate change and its consequences; (b) the HIV/AIDS epidemic and other global health crises; (c) increased food insecurity; (d) economic instability and the intolerance and social tension it brings; and (e) insufficient disaster preparedness. He also said that action had to focus at the community level where MDGs had to be met and that each organisation working on MDG should focus on its respective organisational strength in MDG delivery.

Mr. Gary Cohen (President of Becton Dickson Medical) focussed his remarks on the role which the private sector can play in the achievement of the health-related MDGs. He stated that there is a pressing need to apply the gifts of innovation to developing countries, where they are most needed. In his intervention he focussed on how his company had contributed to addressing this challenge. Noting

that today Africa has 10 per cent of the world population, 25 per cent of the disease burden and only 1.3 per cent of the health workers, he said that his company was focusing on the provision of health services which allow for the provision of vaccinations, basic laboratory work as well as the prevention of the spreading of diseases.

Wrapping up the discussion, **Professor Jeffrey Sachs** (Special Advisor of the Secretary-General for the MDGs) focussed his remarks on the large inequalities present in today's world economy, how the MDGs fit in in this context and how practical low-cost interventions as tried out in the Millennium Villages could help turn around the destiny of the poorest of the poor within a year. He expressed the hope that the Millennium Villages Projects could be rolled out to other parts of the world. He noted that many countries had made requests for villages, but that the requests could not be met due to a shortage of funds. Professor Sachs made an urgent appeal to participants to make the necessary funds available, stressing that the projects cost money, though not a lot of money.

Mr. Jon Hall (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)) said that the agreement of a set of indicators provided by the Millennium Development Goals was a great achievement. At the same time he said that much improvement was still needed to make the indicators more reliable, stressing in particular the need to improve the capacity of national statistical offices. He also stressed that increasing the need to measure societal progress was recognized and that the OECD was partnering with the World Bank, the United Nations and the European Commission to develop a set of economic, social and environmental indicators. In this regard, he informed participants that the OECD will be holding a meeting on "Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies" in June 2007 in Istanbul. The meeting is meant to start a global conversation on "what is meant by progress". The findings of this discussion are meant to prepare the international community as it starts to think beyond 2015.

Mr. Fred Tipson (Senior Policy Counsel and Director for International Development Policy, Microsoft) stressed the need to base partnership on a reliance of the resources that local populations could provide. He said that people need to be given the capability to "take on" technology. He also noted that in particular for women, access to technology is frequently a key to development and to opening the doors of opportunity for them. He therefore urged participants to give women tools that they can use and also to keep resourcefulness in mind when talking about resources.

In a brief interactive debate that followed, 10 delegations (**China, Cuba, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Switzerland, Afghanistan, Armenia, Barbados, France, Chile**) and one institution (**the African Development Bank**) took the floor. The key messages emerged from the interactive discussion are the following

- Many speakers noted the success of **Millennium Villages**, but in scaling up they considered that all development partners need to live up to their commitments.
- Some delegations called for more focus on **ODA, FDI and trade**. Some examples of **innovative mechanism for financing** were presented, such as one involving the Diaspora and the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID).
- Based on their experience, some delegations highlighted the importance of focusing on **women and girls**
- Some delegations stressed the importance of **access to medications and vaccinations** against communicable diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis.

- The importance of improving **aid effectiveness** was reiterated, for which the Paris Declaration provided a framework.
- In addition to Africa, it was pointed out that the **vulnerability** of certain countries, such as the Small Island Developing States, needs to be considered.

IV. Conclusion

H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, President of the General Assembly expressed her satisfaction with the fruitful discussion and emphasized that if we remain committed, we will be able to achieve the MDGs. She reiterated the Secretary General's statement that to achieve the MDGs would be one of the greatest gifts to humanity. Civil society and the private sector must be kept engaged with this process to ensure a more stable and safe world. She expressed her gratitude to the Islamic Development Bank on its announcement of the proposed \$10 billion Poverty Alleviation Fund. She also thanked Mexico and Qatar for playing the pivotal role in driving forward the follow-up process to the International Conference on Financing for Development. She further thanked Qatar for its proposal to host the follow-up meeting to the thematic debate on development during the first half of 2007. She hoped that the discussions would fortify ongoing partnership and pave the way for new ones, with the aim of achieving the MDGs by 2015.



**Programme of the General Assembly's
Informal Thematic Debate on Development
27 November 2006**

**"Partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals:
Taking Stock, Moving Forward"**

I: Morning Session (General Assembly Hall):

- **Time:** 10 AM – 1 PM

- **Format:**

Brief Statements by the following:

- 1- President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly, H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa.
- 2- Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan.
- 3- President of the Economic and Social Council, H.E. Ali Hachani.

3 minute break

- 4- Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Mr. Kemal Dervis.
- 5- Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. José Antonio Ocampo.
- 6- Statement by the President of the Islamic Development Bank Group, Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Ali.
- 7- Presentation by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals, Professor Jeffrey Sachs.
- 8- Followed by interactive debate with the participation of Member States. This segment will commence with presentations from a number of Member States on their National Development Strategies.

II: Afternoon Session (Trusteeship Council):

- **Time:** 3 PM – 5:30 PM



- **Format:** Town Hall Meeting.

An interactive debate with the participation of Member States, Private Sector, and Civil Society. This segment will include a Panel discussion with the participation of the following speakers:

- H.E. Mr. Zola Skweyiya, Minister for Social Development, Republic of South Africa.
- H.E. Dr. Fatima Al-Balooshi, Minister for Social Development, Kingdom of Bahrain.
- Ms. Maureen Harrington, Vice-President for Policy and International Relations, Millennium Challenge Corporation.
- H.E. Mr. Hisham Alwugayan, Deputy Director General, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.
- Mr. George Soros, Chairman of the Soros Fund Management.
- Ms. Joanna Kerr, Executive Director, Association for Women in Development.
- Mr. John Gage, Vice-President, Sun Microsystems.
- H.E. Mr. Markku Niskala, Secretary General, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
- Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals.
- Mr. Gary Cohen, President of Becton Dickinson Medical.

II: Concluding Session (Trusteeship Council):

- **Time:** 5:30 PM

The President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly will make concluding remarks summarizing the main points of the discussions.

P.S. *The afternoon session will be moderated by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Mr. Shashi Tharoor.*

27 November 2006

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Informal Thematic Debate on Partnerships towards Achieving
the MDGs: Taking Stock, Moving Forward**

Secretary General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you all for coming today. I am particularly grateful to those of you who have traveled to New York.

We gather here to discuss progress made so far to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. To identify those obstacles that threaten their achievement, and, explore new partnerships to accelerate progress to achieve them by 2015.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to the Secretary General, Kofi Annan. His outstanding tenure will leave a lasting legacy. Thanks to his leadership, the implementation of all development commitments has become the top priority for the United Nations. Through the universally accepted MDGs he has helped to provide us with a program of action to achieve a better world, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable.

World leaders have reaffirmed the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative and policymaking organ of the United Nations. We are holding this event today because the General Assembly can boost efforts to make a real impact on the lives of the poor.

Our emphasis must be on partnership because the development goals of Member States will only be achieved if the private sector, civil society and governments are fully engaged.

I would like to set the scene for the debate today by taking stock of the challenges ahead and the progress we have already made.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the beginning of the 21st century, we are a global family that is more interdependent than ever before. We now have the choice to play a critical role to eradicate poverty forever.

But for many, we live in an uncertain world.

In some countries, pregnancy and childbirth kill a woman every minute -- they die with no trained midwife or doctor to help.

270 million children worldwide have no access to healthcare, and four million children die each year in the first month of their short life.

We live in a world where each year malaria kills one million people, tuberculosis two million people, AIDS three million people. Every human life lost is a tragedy.

In education, we are not on course to achieve equal enrolment of girls and boys, and universal access to primary education by 2015. While globally we will meet the poverty reduction goal, there's a huge challenge in Africa, which saw poverty rise in the last decade.

The situation is worse in countries affected by conflict, which receive less aid but contain the highest concentration of the world's poor.

Almost two in three people lack access to clean drinking water. Close to half the population in developing countries suffer from health problems caused by poor water and sanitation.

To meet the water target we need to bring additional clean water to three hundred thousand people every day for the next decade. That is why I invite you all to see Dean Kamen's groundbreaking system to purify water at low cost outside the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

All of these challenges are taking place in a rapidly changing world.

Within three decades urban populations will more than double, putting an additional strain on basic services like health and education.

Some countries are trading more, helping to create rising global prosperity, while others are being left behind. The stalled Doha Round was meant to address this. Concluding Doha could help to lift 140 million people out of poverty.

Climate change has the potential to cause untold damage. In sub-Saharan Africa it could mean that food production is reduced by a fifth.

So we do face huge challenges, but we should take hope from the progress that is being made.

In the past 40 years, life expectancy in the developing world increased by a quarter.

In the past 30 years, illiteracy has fallen by half.

In the past 20 years, 400 million people lifted out of absolute poverty.

Last year official development assistance reached \$100 billion for the first time. Smallpox has been eradicated, and we are nearly there with polio.

And last year the world came together and agreed to do more. The Millennium Summit, the G8 and the Global Call to Action Against Poverty.

Donor countries agreed \$50 billion extra in aid, with \$25 billion to Africa, by 2010. And the debt of 20 countries was fully cancelled, over \$81 billion.

And today, on behalf of the President of the Islamic Development Bank, Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Ali, Vice President Dr Amadou Boubacar Cisse, former Prime Minister of Niger, will announce an additional new finance for the MDGs.

In partnership, we have made progress on a number of things.

We may not have made poverty history, but we are making progress. The challenge for all of us is to make good on our commitments and work in closer partnership.

That is why civil society, NGOs, the media and private sector have such an important role in achieving the MDGs.

The private sector is critical for generating jobs and higher wages, allowing higher public spending on basic services such as education and health.

Social justice is critical to economic prosperity.

And, over the past decade civil society organizations have become important global player in development. They also provide critical support to the UN on the ground.

A reformed and strengthened UN system working with civil society and the private sector will be better able to build capacity for development and deliver more global public goods.

The ultimate test of achieving our shared goals will be about how we manage the policy challenges of the future, including, urbanization, water scarcity, and climate change.

For example, the UNDP human development report argues that we need a new agricultural revolution for water - a "blue revolution" - to ensure the gains in food production are not wiped out as rivers run dry.

The changing climate is having the greatest impact on poor countries. The partnership of the scientific community and private sector will be essential to support their adaptation strategies.

But most of all, if the MDGs are to be achieved, it is critical that both developing and developed countries live up to the commitments made at last year's World Summit.

As developing countries adopt comprehensive national strategies then donors must deliver on commitments to provide additional resources to enable them to succeed.

And together, with all parties, the UN can foster partnerships to help deliver our shared goals.

This global partnership for development is a compact.

When poverty is so immediate and the suffering so intense, the world has a moral and strategic obligation, to address the concerns of the poorest and most vulnerable, particularly in Africa.

The President of the United States, John F. Kennedy once warned us that if a free society cannot help the many who are poor; it cannot save the few who are rich.

Each of us here today has a responsibility for delivering their share of the commitments we have promised. We are all accountable.

We must remember that these commitments are endorsed by world leaders, and I quote;

"We, Heads of State and Government... strongly reiterate our determination to ensure the timely and full realization of the Millennium Development Goals... We underline the need for urgent action on all sides". End of quote.

So following on from the 60th session of the GA - the year of promises and commitments - the 61st session is the year of action and implementation. We must all strive to create an atmosphere that can build effective partnerships towards achieving our shared goals.

I hope that our discussions today can cement our ongoing partnerships and pave the way for new ones, in the spirit of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Thank you.

27 November 2006

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Closing Session of the Informal Thematic Debate on
Partnerships towards Achieving the MDGs: Taking Stock, Moving
Forward**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

We have come to the end of a very fruitful discussion on "Partnership for achieving the MDGs: taking stock, moving forward".

We have been reminded that if we remain committed that we can overcome the challenges we face and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, by 2015.

We were also reminded by the Secretary General that achieving the MDGs by 2015 is one of the greatest gifts that we could give to humanity. Our challenge is to keep up the momentum.

As I stated this morning, I remain convinced that the development goals of member states will only be achieved if the private sector, civil society and governments are fully engaged. The UN must therefore continue to play a critical role in fostering global and local partnerships.

That is why it was vital for the General Assembly to hold an informal debate on development, including the private sector and civil society, to ensure a broad discussion.

We have heard that it is time for action on the ground, time for new partnerships involving the private sector and civil society, and time to deliver on commitments and promises.

We have also heard about the need to move beyond the traditional donor and recipient relationship if we are to achieve our shared goals. But also, that delivering our development goals will help to make the world a safer, more stable and prosperous place for all. To achieve this we will need an integrated global partnership for development.

A true global compact.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to thank all Member States for their support and active participation in this event today. Particularly, to those Ministers and senior officials who have taken time from their busy schedules to be with us.

I would like once again to commend the generous commitment of the Islamic Development Bank to fighting poverty with its proposed 10 billion US\$ Poverty Alleviation Fund.

I would also like to thank Mexico and Qatar for playing an important role, driving forward the follow up to Monterrey, to ensure the full implementation of the MDGs.

And, today I can announce that Qatar has offered to host the follow-up to this thematic debate on development during the first half of 2007.

I am also encouraged by the commitment from civil society and the private sector representatives from Egypt and South Africa to hold a follow-up meeting shortly.

I am also grateful that Dean Kamen could join us today, to display his low cost water purification system, in the hallway outside the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

And finally, I would like to offer my personal thanks to all Panelists, who have come to the United Nations today to enrich us with their practical experience and perspectives on development.

And last but not least let me warmly thank the Undersecretary General, Shashi Tharoor for his excellent job in moderating this afternoon session.

I hope that our discussions today can cement our ongoing partnerships and pave the way for new ones, in the spirit of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

I shall shortly circulate a summary of today's discussions to all Members States and other participants.

Thank you.